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Letter dated 5 June 1998 from the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission to the Chairman of the First Committee

On 28 April 1998 the Disarmament Commission concluded its 1998 substantive session and submitted its report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.[1] During the session, the Commission considered the issue of the revitalization, rationalization and streamlining of its work, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 52/12 B of 19 December 1997. Since the Assembly requested that deliberations on this issue be concluded before the end of the fifty-second session, I attach herewith for consideration by the First Committee at its resumed session, to be held from 29 June to 2 July, the relevant part of the Commission's report, namely, the report of the Committee of the Whole, which deals specifically with the issue (see annex).

(*Signed*) Sergei **Martynov**

[1] To be issued as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 42* (A/53/42).

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Annex

Report of the Committee of the Whole of the Disarmament Commission

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/12 B of 19 December 1997, the Committee of the Whole considered the work of the Disarmament Commission with a view to its revitalization, rationalization and streamlining.

2. Based on views expressed by delegations at the meeting of the Committee of the Whole on 14 April, as well as in the course of the Chairman's intensive consultations, the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission presented an informal proposal (see appendix), which is a reflection of his understanding of possible areas of agreement.

3. It was recognized that a further discussion of the issue was required and that, in this connection, the Chairman's proposal could be used for continued consultations among Member States with a view to presenting recommendations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/12 B.

Appendix

Chairman's proposal for revitalization, rationalization and streamlining of the work of the Disarmament Commission

1. The Disarmament Commission continues to play a unique role within the mechanism on disarmament as the only body with universal membership for in-depth deliberation on relevant disarmament issues.

2. As of the substantive session of 1999 the substantive agenda of the Disarmament Commission should normally comprise two items per year, including one on nuclear disarmament matters. Parallel meetings of the subsidiary bodies are excluded. The possibility of a third agenda item would be retained if there were consensus to adopt such an item while maintaining overall balance in the agenda.

3. Annual substantive sessions of the Disarmament Commission last three weeks.

4. Substantive agenda items are considered in the Disarmament Commission for three years. Other options for the duration of consideration of an item, according to its specificity, may be adopted on an ad hoc basis by consensus.

5. The regional groups are urged to make possible an early election of the chairmen of the subsidiary bodies, preferably at the organizational session of the Commission in the fall, so as to allow them to conduct inter-sessional consultations on respective subjects. It is desirable that continuity of chairmanship of the subsidiary bodies be maintained throughout the consideration of a substantive item.

6. Further optimization of the Disarmament Commission procedures, according to circumstances, may be a continuing consensus-based process, *inter alia*, in the context of the review of United Nations disarmament machinery.

7. It was also felt that complementarity of efforts, as appropriate, between the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission in the consideration of substantive issues could be an asset for all the disarmament forums involved.